

2011 PETER FRANUS RED HILLS LAKE COUNTY RED WINE



Vineyards:	Fore Family Vineyard
Composition:	60% Syrah 30% Grenache 10% Mourvèdre
Harvest Date:	Oct. 28, 31, Nov. 2, 2011
Fermentation:	10 days average, up to 80°
Maceration:	10 days average
Oak aging:	19 months 100% French Oak 30% new Burgundian coopers
Bottling Date:	June 18, 2013
Production:	275 cases 750ml

Twelve years ago, well before many were seriously considering the potential of Lake County, one of my best growers, Jim Fore, took a gamble and purchased property on the top of Cobb Mountain. The vineyard site is located a few miles east of Sonoma County and a dozen miles north of Napa Valley's Calistoga.

This is a spectacular property, situated at 3000 feet elevation. Soils are thin in the Red Hills and drain instantly. The elevation places vines well above the hot summer heat trapped in the valleys below, and aligns them in the path of cool westerly Pacific breezes. At the same time, there is paradoxically greater solar intensity that has some magical and perhaps inexplicable effect on the grapes. Because of the high elevation, the differential between day and night time temperatures is dramatic. This results in grapes with intense flavor and color development.

This is unquestionably one of the most beautiful and peaceful vineyard sites I have ever worked with—and that's 30 years of experience talking! The quality of fruit emerging from this property is special.

2011 was a complicated vintage. A cool wet spring diminished crop levels in many vineyards and late ripening vineyards were problematic. On the other hand, cool conditions allowed wonderful flavor development with ripeness achieved at lower sugar levels. If you were one of the fortunate ones, you had the opportunity to produce some wonderful wines. Call us fortunate!

As for our 2011 Rhône blend—this wine represents a bit of a turning point. It is a little less dense and brooding than previous vintages with heightened liveliness and vibrancy. Some whole clusters added to the fermenter and increased percentages of Grenache and Mourvedre have resulted in more exotic aromas and flavors with more approachable tannins. Still dark ruby and youthful, anise, smoked ham, black cherry and rose petal aromas draw you in. Flavors reflect the nose, expanding and lingering beautifully on the palate.

My final note in my long list—this is a wine that clearly invites another sip!